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Renascent Religions and the Gospel

by HARRY PARTIN

IN 1946 Dr. Merle Davis, Director of Research of the International Missionary Council, wrote: "While the non-Roman Catholic churches of the world are evangelizing between *one and two million* non-Christians a year, in each twelve months a net *twenty to twenty-five millions* are added to the non-Christian population of the world." (International Review of Missions, April, 1946). He did not attempt to say what proportion gave some allegience, nominal or real, to the non-Christian religions. Undoubtedly, it would be an overwhelming majority.

The Expansion and Resurgence of the Non-Christian Religions

The growth of the non-Christian religions is not due solely to population growth, but also to the missionary efforts of adherents of the major non-Christian religions (Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam). J. Spencer Trimingham in *The Christian Church and Islam in West Africa* (I. M. C. Research Series, No. 3) writes of the extent and effectiveness of Muslim expansion into the interior of Africa: ". . . Islam is no longer limited to the desert and northern steppe but has penetrated even into the forest region." Dr. Max Warren writes of Buddhist missionary activity: "A million rupee fund is being raised by the Buddhists in Ceylon to send a mission to Germany. Centres of Buddhist studies are becoming a feature in many Western countries, in Europe and America." (C. M. S. News-Letter, June, 1956). Muslim mosques are now found in Chicago, New York, and several other large cities of the United States. A national magazine recently published a two-page color picture of the new mosque in Washington. Hindu *Vedanta* has its missionaries in the West and finds many admirers, if few adherents, among the *intelligensia* of the West.

The resurgence of the non-Christian religions exhibits itself also in the theological sphere. For example, not only are there Muslim missionaries, but there is increasingly an Islamic theology of missions. These religions are no longer on the defensive, but are caught up in the whole Asian and African reaction against the West. Not only is the uniqueness and superiority of the Christian religion denied, but Buddhists, Hindus, and Muslims claim uniqueness and superiority for their own religions.

It is not simply that th religions are expanding geographically, numerically, and theologically. At the base of the expansion there is a resurgence of the religions in their traditional strongholds. Expectations of an earlier generation of Christian missionaries were that under the impact of Christianization and Westernization the non-Christian religions would grow weaker and weaker. This has not happened. In many countries the religions have greater vitality than when Christian missions began their work. To say that this is due to "the failure of Christian missions" is far too simple an answer and discounts the steady accomplishments of missions (including their role in stimulating developments *within* the religions). An understanding of the nature and sources of the religious resurgence is imperative for the church today. It involves seeing the religious developments in their intimate inter-relationships with the whole social, political, and economic context. Response and reaction to Western technology with its accompanying philosophy of materialism (certainly as seen from the Asian point of view), the assertion of the values of the traditional religion and culture, the attempt at a cultural re-integration, the growth of national self-consciousness and striving for independence, the attempts to cope with the modern world—all these are powerful factors in the resurgence and have yet to be understood in their full implications.

The Meeting of the Religions

The resurgence of the religions means that a new "religious encounter" is beginning to take place. At innumerable points and in a variety of forms the religions are meeting in a new way. As stated above, most of the Asian and African countries are attempting a cultural re-integration. The religions are meeting as they relate themselves to this task. The Asian and African churches stand today as churches in the midst of all the problems and tensions such a mammoth task involves. The temptation of the churches is to avoid the additional tension that is created in being a witnessing church. It may accept a ghetto existence in the presence of the religious majorities hoping thereby to receive certain rights and to be let alone, or it may participate in the cultural re-integration by an uncritical identification with national aims and programs. To remain the church is to pay the price of the tensions of encounter.

The churches in Asia and Africa are called to fight the spiritual battles inherent in their own situations. It may be that in this age of ecumenical contact and of theological and cultural exchange, churches and theologians, scholars and missionaries (who have adequate knowledge and experience of the non-Christian cultures and religions) will lend their aid. But it will always remain aid, not the real battle, for two reasons: first, because it is the churches' peculiar, God-given task, which no one can take from them, or take over for them; second, because the non-Christian environment can only take seriously the Christian witness of churches which are a part of the same life-texture and of the same historical situation and destiny.

Christian Views of the Relationship between Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions

During the early decades of the present century Christians gave considerable thought to the relationship between Christianity and the other religions. While they could be extremely critical of the crudities of popular Hinduism, for example, they could write appreciatively Bhakti Hinduism ("loving devotion"). The tendency among missionaries as well as among historians of religion was to see elements in the major religions which seemed to be evidences of God's activity there. The Rev. J. N. Farquhar's book, *The Crown of Hinduism* (1913), crystallized missionary opinion on the relationship between Christianity and the religions. Farquhar held that in Hinduism there are longings and glimpses of truth which find their "fulfillment" in Christianity. The Christian missionary should seek to discover the elements of truth in Hinduism and to show how these find clear and complete expression in Christianity. Farquhar wrote: "Christ provides the fulfillment of the highest aspirations of Hinduism . . . He is the Crown of the Faith of India." The missionary has a "point of contact" with the Hindu at the same time that he is maintaining the superiority and finality of the Christian religion.

In 1932 *Re-thinking Missions: A Laymen's Inquiry after One Hundred Years* was published. Its conception of the relationship among the religions was plainly that of the chairman of the Laymen's Commission, William Ernest Hocking. It rejected the doctrines of "fulfillment" and urged instead a doctrine of "reconception." By "reconception" was meant that each religion should think through its own meaning anew, not alone, but in contact and conversation with the other religions. In the end, it was believed, Christianity would become the world faith but it would be a deepened and broadened Christianity, more aware of its own distinctive nature and contributions and at the same time enriched by the religious insights of non-Christian religious men. The task of Christian missionaries, it was held, is not to evangelize directly, but to share religious experiences with men of other religions in order that the depths of those experiences might be sounded and profounder religious insights revealed. The report aroused considerable discussion and debate, but it did not greatly affect the outlook of the churches and missionary societies. "Fulfillment" still held the field generally.

In 1938 Professor Hendrik Kraemer, a Dutch missionary in Indonesia and later Professor of the History of Religions in the University of Leiden, wrote *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World,* a keen and forceful indictment of both "fulfillment" and "reconception." The book was written in preparation for the meeting of the International Missionary Council in Tambaram, Madras, in 1938 and set off the famous "Tambaram Debate." Professor Kraemer held that Jesus Christ is not the fulfillment of the religions, but is rather the "crisis" of all religions. The Gospel is set against all religion. According to Kraemer, man makes his religion. That is, "religion" is a product of man's mind and spirit as he tries to give order and meaning to his experience. The Gospel, in contrast to religion, is God's revelation of his nature and will. All religions, including Christianity, stand under the judgment of the Gospel. They are to be transformed, not fulfilled, by it. Nor is "reconception" a proper course for the Christian missionary. To try to "reconceive" Christianity is simply to compound man's sin in trying to "find out" the God who has already revealed himself fully and finally in Jesus Christ, the Word become flesh. Christian faith is not a quest but a response. The task of the missionary is that of faithful witness to a Gospel which judges his religion as severely as that of his hearer. In his latest book (*Religion and the Christian Faith,* 1956) Professor Kraemer says the missionary must have "radical humility and downright intrepidity": humility with regard to himself and intrepidity with regard to his message.

Most of the discussion of the relationship of Christianity and the non-Christian religions since Tambaram has centered around Professor Kraemer's book and the issues it raises. In general, it may be said that the European theologians and missionary specialists in the religions have sided with Professor Kraemer in his main theses. The writings of his fellow-country man, J. H. Bavinck, reveal significant dissatisfactions and elsewhere divergencies are to be noted. The British, American, and some "Younger Churches" scholars and theologians who have concerned themselves with these questions have commonly tried to find a middle way in the debates. On the one hand, they have wanted to take full account of the uniqueness of the Gospel and the religion to which it has given rise. On the other hand, they have generally held that God has revealed something of his nature and will in the non-Christian religions and that the response to that "general revelation" (as it was commonly called) has not been totally false.

The paper contributed to the Tambaram debate by an American participant, Dr. Walter Marshall Horton, was significantly entitled "Between Hocking and Kraemer." He wrote of being in "a state in which my Hocking-self, though chastened and corrected, has neither been put to flight by nor absorbed within my Kraemer-self, but survives and flourishes, sometimes quite at peace with my Kraemer-self, sometimes carrying on a lively campaign against the theological errors that appear to be implicit in Kraemerism." (*The Authority of the Faith,* Madras series, Vol. 1). The chief question Horton put to Professor Kraemer was this:

> How then is it possible to draw so sharp a distinction as Kraemer draws between the prophetic religion of biblical revelation and all other religions, as though the former alone represented God's word to man, and the latter were simply man's vain and presumptuous attempt to scale the heavens? If presumption and self-aggrandizement appear in Christianity, do not humility, awe, self-abasement in the presence of the Holy One appear in non-Christian religions, and are they not signs of a genuine though incomplete self-revelation of the divine Word, operative from of old in every land?

The most effective "challenger" of Kraemer's theses today appears to be Dr. Kenneth Cragg of the Hartford Seminary Foundation whose recent book, *The Call of the Minaret,* deals with Muslim-Christian relationships in a fresh and convincing way.

Today it is the non-Christian religions which are raising the question of their relationship to Christianity. As Dr. Cragg has put it in regard to Islam: "Islam is cross-examining Christianity." Confident, thoughtful adherents of the religions are forcing a reexamination of the relationship and they will not accept easy answers. Indeed, they intend to provide the answers (One has only to think of Radhakrishnan in India).

A Consultation on "Christianity and Non-Christian Religions" was held at Davos, Switzerland, in 1955 under the auspices of the Departments of Evangelism and Missionary Studies of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council. Its stated purpose was to resume the Tambaram debate. However, it was soon apparent that while the issues of Tambaram were very much alive, the situation was so vastly different that a resumption of the debate as such was unwise and even impossible. Clearly, the time was right for a thoroughgoing study of Christianity and non-Christian religions *in the new context.*

The same concern was finding expression along another line. The Willingen (Germany) Conference of the International Missionary Council in 1952 recommended the setting up of regional centers for the study of the non-Christian religions. Such centers have been established in the Near East, India, Ceylon, and Hong Kong while others are contemplated (for example, in West Pakistan and Burma). It was clear that any ecumenical study in Christianity and the non-Christian religions would work in closest co-operation with these centers and that they would be the focal point for actual research.

The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches approved in 1956 the undertaking of a study project, "The Word of God and the Living Faiths of Men," jointly by the Department of Evangelism and the Department of Missionary Studies. The study was described as being a study of:

> . . . the nature of the living faiths of men and the elements in them of appeal and power;
>
> . . . the nature of the Word of God which is addressed to men who live by these faiths;
>
> . . . the nature of the relation between the Christian message and these faiths;
>
> . . . the ways in which the church may be enabled to communicate this word to those who live by these faiths.

The task of formulating the study in greater detail and of fashioning a working plan is the responsibility of a committee of fifteen historians of religion, missionary scholars, theologians, and biblical scholars drawn from East and West. Three participants in the Tambaram debate (Professors Kraemer and Horton and Dr. David Moses of India) are included. This group will carry on the central theological study and discussion, always in close connection with the "on the spot" studies of the centers. It is hoped to convene the group annually.

Additionally, there is the need to discover the studies and discussions that are already going on, here and there, by individuals and groups, and wherever possible to relate them to the study project. There is also the need to stimulate studies and discussions as widely as possible among individuals, churches, universities, and theological schools.

Disciples of Christ through their Council on Christian Unity were asked by the World Council of Churches to participate in the study project by providing a man to help direct the study and to engage in the study itself. The Council on Christian Unity agreed and the writer was given the assignment. He accepted it with the conviction, well-expressed by Professor Kraemer last year, that "the Christian Church is heading towards a real and spiritual encounter with the great non-Christian religions. Not only because the so-called younger churches, the fruits of the work of modern missions, live in the midst of them, but also because the fast growing interdependence of the whole world forces the existence and vitality of these religions upon us, and makes them a challenge to the Church to manifest in new terms its spiritual and intellectual integrity and value." (*Religion and the Christian Faith,* p. 20)

Culture Religions and the Gospel in Japan

by Hallam C. Shorrock, Jr.

In practice, religion in Japan is understood more in terms of social customs and morality than in terms of a personal relationship to a higher power.

For instance, in Shinto, "the way of the gods," an attempt is made to account for the beginnings of the world, of life, and the nation, the ruler of which is supposed to be a descedant of the Sun Goddess herself. Here there is no ethical sense, but an elaborate array of social customs consisting of purification rites, seeking protection from evil and catastrophe by obeisance to the gods of fortune and ill-fortune; honoring the spirits of emperors, national heroes and ancestors; and seeking the blessing of the gods upon the nation itself.

Buddhism, a religion of India which came to Japan through China and Korea in the 6th century, has as its central philosophy that the world is but a passing moment, a delusion, to which man is chained and suffering in an endless series of rebirths, his lot in each determined by the sum of his actions, good and evil, known as *karma*. Thus man is to seek salvation by escaping from this fleeting world and this endless chain of existence through various means, such as the elimination of self-consciousness, or by moral perfection, repetition of magical formulas, and so forth.

Buddhism, and its highly developed literature, magnificent temples, and devoted priesthood, noted for learning and devotion, brought to Japan many of the basic aspects of her present culture. Professor Latourette reminds us that "Buddhism, indeed, occupied in Japan much the position that the Catholic Church held in the Europe of the Middle Ages. Both were the means of bringing to a semi-barbarous people a superior and older civilization. Both dominated society by their philosophy, learning and priesthood, and their elaborate rituals, their art, and architecture."

Although Confucian ethical concepts were brought to Japan much earlier, they were not studied and really taken seriously until the middle and later years of the Tokugawa Period early in the 17th century, when renewed attention was being given by the Tokugawa rulers to uniting Japan through her religions, language, literature, and native institutions. Confucian ethics have had profound effects upon Japanese culture: added impetus to ancestor worship, loyalty of the servant to his lord, of the governed to the governing, complete obedience of child to parent, subordination of the wife to her husband.

The sum-total of these cultural patterns which have emerged from Shinto, Buddhism, and Confucianism is expressed in the term, *bushido,* the ethical code of the military class, which extends to the heart of every Japanese. According to the *bushido* code of morality, these are the prime virtues:

(1) Loyalty to the nation, which may mean sacrificing life, truth, or even family itself.

(2) Loyalty to one's family and ancestors, and the preservation of family unity.

(3) Conformity to established codes of conduct set by society.

(4) Economy, simplicity of life, and indifference to wealth.

(5) Self control in the presence of pain, and the repression of emotions, especially when among others.

(6) Disgrace and defeat atoned for by suicide, or complete removal from the immediate situation.

In summary, the general characteristics of Japanese culture as it has developed through the centuries are based upon the fundamental concepts of Shinto, Buddhism, and Confucianism. These characteristics can be described as follows:

(1) There is among the people of Japan an unusual yearning and striving for the natural and real. For the Shinto "way of the gods" means the natural state of things, since the native Japanese gods were not gods of right and wrong but merely natural gods, i.e., sun goddess, god of thunder, fox god, etc. Thus while Japan's cultural heritage—her metaphysical and conceptual philosophies—have come from her Indian and Chinese neighbors, it has not been developed any further, but has been remade into something very "real and apropos" of Japanese nature. This brings us to the second characteristic.

(2) Japan has not shown the same creative spirit in philosophy, ethics, or religion equal to that evidenced by the Chinese, Indian, or Semitic races.

(3) On the contrary, throughout her history, Japan has exhibited the amazing ability to absorb foreign cultures and values, and then to "Japanize" them in order to strengthen her own cultural patterns and institutions. This is pointedly illustrated in Japan's acceptance of Buddhism from China. Upon receiving the first missionaries in the seventh century, the Japanese were at first extremely suspicious and labelled Buddhism a "foreign religion." For 130 years after the coming of the first missionary priests, Buddhism in Japan remained clothed in its Chinese garments of language and thought. As time went on, it became apparent that Buddhism represented a higher civilization and level of thought which might benefit Japan. Thereupon, with the training of Japanese Buddhist priests, themselves steeped in the national spirit of Shinto, a strong national Japanizing-bent was given to this imported religion, chiefly by the application of a doctrine tailored for the occasion, *Honji-suijaku,* according to which the natural dieties of Shinto were regarded as various manifestations of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

(4) In going back to the sum-total of the cultural patterns which have emerged from Shinto, Buddhism, and Confucianism, it must be said that the whole Japanese code of ethics exists within the framework of a tightly-woven society, the center of which is loyalty to the nation and emperor, and out from which emerge the concentric and inter-woven web of family relationships and loyalties—all of which are arranged in an exact hierarchical relationship.

Thus, Japanese ethics are always society-centered, and the individual has no other place than to exist as an integrated part of that society.

(5) Therefore, the fifth characteristic of Japanese culture is, as Professor Douglas Haring has pointed out, a "Shame Culture." The driving motive of individuals is to conform to the established patterns of society. When this conformity is broken by an act against society, rather than feeling a sense of guilt, the offender feels ashamed and fears ridicule by his friends, not necessarily for the act itself, but because it was done out of conformity to society itself.

(6) The last major characteristic of Japanese culture which must be mentioned is the aesthetic sensitiveness of the Japanese to a degree unequalled in corresponding social levels elsewhere. For it was the interplaying of her religious traditions—the nationalistic Shinto worship, the central thought of Buddhism, particularly Zen, and the utilization of the Confucian principles of ethics, which produced the gentle arts of poetry (*haiku*), calligraphy, painting, the tea ceremony, flower arrangement, landscape gardening, the quiet simplicity of austere Japanese architec-

ture, as well as the brutal techniques of *ju-jitsu, ken-jutsu,* and *bushido,* all of which are today practiced by most Japanese, men and women alike, in one way or another.

While it is often said that there is today no connection between Japanese religions and life, it must be recognized that historically, religious practice in Japan represents an equation of religiosity and custom and morality. Indeed it is the social manifestations of these religions alien to Christianity which has kept the strength of the church trimmed down so considerably. It is to this aspect of the problem which we must turn.

What has been the historic relationship between Christianity and Japanese culture? When we speak of Christianity, we must speak both of Catholic and Protestant Christianity. Here much has been written, and it is necessary only to summarize the characteristics of each in their interplay with Japanese culture.

(1) Both were introduced to Japan during periods when Japan was forcibly obliged to open her doors to the West, Catholic Christianity in 1549 by the Jesuit, Francis Xavier, and Protestant Christianity in 1859 by Presbyterian J. C. Hepburn and the Reformed Church in America. In both cases the coming of Christianity was closely associated with expanding trade and commercial conquests, in the case of Catholicism by Europeans, and in the case of Protestantism by the Americans.

(2) In both instances there was tremendous interest on the part of the Japanese, because of (a) hopes for valuable trade with the West, (b) the low ebb of Japanese religious life, and (c) the hope of building a stronger Japan by adopting Western patterns.

(3) Those who first were attracted to the gospel were the young *samurai* who, with the weakening of the feudal estates in the centralization of government, were looking for new loyalties. Also drawn to Christianity were many of those in the upper classes and the intellectuals, who were eager to study western philosophy.

(4) In the immediate decades after Christianity was introduced, both in the sixteenth and in the nineteenth centuries, there appeared to be tremendous evangelistic progress. For example, it is reported that less than a generation after Xavier's arrival, with only a score of missionaries on the field, there were two hundred churches and 150,000 Christians—almost as many Catholic Christians as there are today. Many felt, even then, that Japan was about to become a Christian nation.

Again, two decades after the introduction of Protestant Christianity in 1859, the forecast was repeated—Japan was truly on the way to becoming a Christian nation. That this optimistic forecast was based on real evidence is shown in the statistics of the amazing growth of the Protestant Church between 1882 and 1888.

		1882		1888
Churches	(13 self supporting)	93	(92 self supporting)	249
Members		4,987		25,514
Missionaries		145		451
Ordained Japanese clergy		49		142
Theological schools		7		14
Theological students		71		287
Mission Schools		63		101
Students in Mission Schools		2,514		9,672

Indeed it was declared in 1888 that Japan was "embracing Christianity with a rapidity unexampled since the days of Constantine."

(5) After each of tthese surges of strength, however, there have been extreme reactions for these reasons:

(a) Christianity had always been associated with Western imperialism—both European and American, which Japan resented.

(b) Christianity, as a "foreign religion" was alien to basic Japanese cultural patterns of societal relationships, from the emperor on down.

(c) Japan has always desired to stress the values of her inherited civilization rather than conform to occidental mores.

(6) The fact that religion in Japan has been completely impersonal, on the one hand associated with the moral and ethical virtues in Confucianism and Buddhism, and on the other hand tending toward emotionalism in Shinto rites and ceremonies, has tended to influence greatly those who are drawn to Christianity. Professor Mikio Sumiya of Tokyo University writes:

> "A weak consciousness of sin has led to the identification of sin with shame; sin is more talked about than the wrath of God actually felt. With the righteousness of God forgotten, the sentimentalized love of God has been too much emphasized. Generally speaking, there are two types of Christian faith in Japan: one is the rational type arising from the fact that Christianity

> was first embraced by the intelligentsia—faith as consisting in emotional excitement. Thus neither of them succeeds in grasping or presenting faith as personal communion between man and God."

(7) Thus the adherent of Christianity in Japan has not had a deep spiritual evangelistic drive usually associated with the individual who realizes his destiny as a son of God and sharer in His redeeming work in history. Neither has Christianity really penetrated Japanese culture.

(8) The immediate effect has been the almost static situation of the Christian church in Japan over the past several decades. Like other Christian minority churches facing unfriendly cultures, the Japanese church (now about 400,000 members—½ Catholics and ½ Protestant) has thus become a "sect church," to use Ernest Troeltsch's definition, which has the sect characteristics noted recently by Dean Liston Pope of Yale Divinity School:

(a) It exists at the periphery rather than the center of its society.

(b) It meets prevailing cultural patterns and organizations with renunciation or indifference.

(c) It emphasizes a more self-centered religion.

(d) It stresses a personal morality rather than a social ethic.

(e) It tends to live in tension with or resistance to rival groups.

(f) It adheres to a more absolute ethic with a tendency towards pacifism.

(g) It stresses a moral community concept, excluding the unworthy.

(h) It shows principal concern for adult members with few infant baptisms.

(i) It emphasizes conversion more than Christian education.

(j) It looks to the future in the "next world."

(k) It encourages a high degree of congregational participation in worship and prayer.

(l) It expresses fewer feeling of confidence, more feelings of persecution.

(m) It shows deep fervor in prayer and worship life.

(n) It stresses Bible study and doctrinal concerns, so that beliefs may be "true" and "sure."

(9) At the same time, in the relationship between members of this "sect" community, we find many of the basic strands of Japanese culture:

- (a) the hierarchical and authoritarian relationship existing from the minister and elders on down to the congregation;
- (b) utter loyalty to a pastor or single congregation;
- (c) conformity to the standards of conduct of the outer society;
- (d) economy and simplicity of life;
- (e) Christianity is seen as only a "personal matter" because of its incongruity with basic patterns of Japanese culture yet there is little conception of other "persons"—fellow members of the household of faith. Thus there is seldom any idea of real community, beyond a local church.

If one accepts the conclusions that the Japanese church exhibits a serious lack of cultural consciousness, because of its inability to pierce the religio-cultural walk around it, where do we go from here? What is our task as Christians witnessing in Japan?

First of all let us remind ourselves of the essential nature of our gospel, as well as our ministry and mission as bearers of it.

> *Our Gospel*: For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent the son into the world not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. (John 3:17)

> *Our ministry and mission*: God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself . . . so we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. (II Cor. 5:19, 20,17)

What then ought to be the relationship between the Gospel and Japanese culture? How can Christians penetrate this hitherto unpenetrated wall?

Can we not say that our ministry of reconciliation is concerned, not primarily with ignoring this wall nor with trying to batter it down with the heavy guns of Biblical proof texts, but rather with the conversion or re-birth of a given culture as a new creation in Christ, even as we seek the re-birth and conversion of an individual person?

Recognizing the fact that there are many aspects of Japanese culture and society which are incongruous to the Christian gospel and ethic, such as blind loyalty to the state, the web-like hierarchical structure of society which strangles the individual, and accompanying suppression of human rights, we must affirm that God's redemptive love is aimed at making these wrong relationships right. This means, however, centering our attack not on these patterns, but on the religious values upon which they are based. As Dr. Emil Brunner, in *The Divine Imperative* reminds us,

> "Whenever anyone wishes to make far-reaching changes in the structure of society—marriage, law, the State, civilized life, etc.,—he must aim at altering the system of values which determines them. The system of values is the connection between the deepest bases of existence, the interpretation of existence, and the social actuality. All direct civil action is short-lived and changes nothing under the surface; the really shattering changes of the social structure take place as changes in the system of values, which for its part, depends on faith and unbelief."

What does this mean in the actual practice of missionary strategy for the Christian movement in Japan?

This means that in a general way the Christian gospel and its basic values must be introduced through the existing cultural patterns and relationships of Japanese society. Here it may be necessary to put the new wine into old wineskins.

Therefore the following points of strategy and technique ought to be included in the over-all strategy for bringing to Japan, her people and culture, the living Gospel of a personal God of creation, judgement, mercy, and eternal redemption, who has acted, and acts now in history.

(1) A systematic study of Japanese religious values to determine which can be baptized into Christ and which must be discarded.

(2) Once these basic values, which can be redeemed by Christ, are known and understood, the gospel can be presented in these terms as a fulfillment of what Paul talked about when he said in Romans 1:20, "ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made."

(3) Once the best semantic and psychological vehicles for the actual communication of the Christian gospel are known, then the expressions of the gospel in terms of meeting the problems of Japanese society must be clearly stated and *put into practice.* Unless the gospel speaks to the needs of the unemployed miner, to the farmer whose crops

are being destroyed each year by flood, and to his 2nd and 3rd son who, because of lack of workable land, are forced to come to the city to eke out a living, to the farmer's daughter who is sold into 3-year servitude for $20 because there is not enough food to go around, or to other problems, the gospel will continue to be considered along with the other religions as irrelevant. The other alternative is a "religion" which does seem to speak to society, Communism.

(4) The full gospel of Christ must be presented within the framework and according to the pattern of the web-society. For instance, special efforts ought to be made to bring the gospel to

(a) the Imperial Household and Emperor,
(b) the Heads of Japanese Government bureaus, businesses, labor unions,
(c) governors and officials of the prefectures, counties, and cities,
(d) village headmen,
(e) fathers and first-sons,
(f) teachers, and those in training to teach,
(g) students of the Imperial universities (which furnish 80% of most of the high Government officials and business heads.)

This was the secret of the original strength which Buddhism enjoyed in Japan, for the Buddhist monks in the 6th century went first to the head of the most powerful family, Soga, who become an ardent adherent, and promulgated Buddhism among the people. Later Prince Shotoku of the Imperial family became such an ardent adherent of Buddhism that he came to be called the Buddhist "Constantine" of Japan. This too was the secret of the strength of the early Catholic leaders, who went straight to the ruling clans and families, as well as to the rural areas.

(5) By the same token, any changes in the life of the churches—such as more congregational freedom, lay participation, concern for society—must be introduced and promulgated from the top down—and taught in the theological seminaries.

(6) Basic evangelistic methods should be aimed at whole families—and not just individuals. Traditional family religious customs—worship and obeyances before the family god shelves, must be baptized into Christ, and Christian forms of worship and ritual ought to be introduced.

(7) The ministry of the church to those in need must be extended more and more to those outside of its own narrow fellowship. It is through such a witness that the fellowship itself will grow. The saying of Jesus that "he who saves his life will lose it, and he who loses his life, for my sake will find it," applies to the life of the corporate Christian community as well as to the individuals within it.

In summary, the lack of cultural consciousness within the Christian community in Japan goes back to the historical relationship which has existed between religion and culture in Japan. Messengers of the gospel have as yet been unable to penetrate this wall of religious-cultural synthesis. Our common missionary task then, is to seek after the transformation of individual lives, as well as the religious values and cultural patterns of our society. The validity of the Japanese religions as representing the seeking of the soul after God—the striving of the finite for the infinite—must be recognized; however it must also be recognized that the religious values which are the bases for Japanese cultural order and variation, are anthropocentric.

Christianity is a religion, but it is something more . . . it is Revelation, the movement of God to man, from the Infinite to the finite. God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. In the revelation of Jesus Christ, and in the continual creative and redeeming work of His Holy Spirit, God comes to man, and man is free to respond in faith, knowing that he is entering a never-ending history of redemption. This must be our message through the avenues of Japanese cultural patterns which reach directly into the hearts and minds of the people. Its proclamation and our continual witness to His love is the heart of the task ahead.

Industrial Workers and the Gospel in Germany

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Our subject is that of the non-churchgoer in industry. Others have explained the historical and psychological background of the working world, the structural changes in human life, and the position and task of the evangelical employer in business and society. I shall confine my speech to the worker who has lost his connection with the Church. What can we do for him?

What I have to say is based on experiences over the last three years in three firms; a chemical factory with 4000 employees, a cement factory with 1400, and a paper business with 500, male and female employees. Five years ago I was taken on in the cement factory as an extra hand. Since then I have worked every year for weeks or months on end in the same factory, but each time in a different department. Since May, 1954, the pastor in charge of the parish, in which this factory is situated, has worked here for four days of the week and had three days entirely free for his parish. Before this arrangement he worked for a year in a quarry belonging to the same works. In both the other firms there are two Dutchmen employed, one a trained theologian, who has worked there part-time for 1½ years, the other a student from the Institute "Church and World" in Driebergen.

1. *The Separation.* For the non-churchgoer there is no connection between his working world and the church. It's true that there is one between his personal and family world and the church, but only in the frontier situations of birth (Baptism), growing-up (Confirmation), marriage (Wedding) and death (Burial). These are the occasions in human life which are the objects of special rites (cults) in all religions. In any case the appeal to the church on these occasions cannot be used as a proof of the expression of Christian belief on the part of the non-churchgoers. True that they too can talk of God, but He belongs to the reli-

gious sphere. He has nothing to do with everyday, with work and play. Machines function just as well without God, production is a creation of man. Man is Lord of the world of work. God may be Lord in the religious sphere in the church. In this sphere one can attend certain functions, but one can also refrain from doing so. *Here* is my daily life—*there* religion; *here* the material reality—*there* pious ideology; *here* the hard struggle of life—*there* unreal moral teaching; to sum up, here am I in my world; *there* is the church outside the real events of daily life.

An appalling thing has happened; after Jesus Christ, under the preaching of the Church, God and Man have been separated.

2. *The Incarnation.* How can we make it clear to non-churchgoers that since Jesus Christ there is no separation between God and Man? A theological statement is no help here. The preaching of Jesus Christ must take flesh once more here and now in the working world, as that world has been described in previous talks. It is not enough that the church should now and then express an interest for man in his world of work; that it should if possible compose a "Word for the Social situation," or attract the non-churchgoer by an evangelistic campaign with relevant themes. The Incarnation of God took place in the world. Jesus Christ didn't wait in the temple for those who were interested in His message, but was found among those who had no attraction to the temple. Our task, therefore, is not to find a way to call the non-churchgoer back to the place where Christians gather and hold their services. On the contrary, in the steps of this Jesus we must leave our established position and stand at the side of the non-churchgoer, the man who does not understand and the non-religious, yes, and the godless. It is not a question of defending and maintaining the Church but of winning men.

In the Evanston report of Section II it says "The first step in evangelism must always be not one of controversy but of identification and alongsidedness." That means in the first place renouncing that exaggerated hectic activity which tries to convince the non-churchgoer. It is rather something quite simple; being there, standing by the other in his world. It means loving one's neighbour in the world of work. I should like to translate this as:—taking him seriously in his achievement, in his wish to improve his standard of living and ensure his material existence; taking him seriously in his fear of being always dependent on his firm or his professional association.

The command to show such love for one's neighbour holds for all Christians who are themselves inside the world of work. But if they are not there, or do not carry out this service, then the officers of the church must take on the job. The first result of doing so will be to their own advantage. For here they learn to know conditions that form men today more lastingly than all the attempts by the Church to influence the outsider by occasional missionary undertakings or public pronouncements. Here they get to know man in his normal life, in his worldliness and his mistrust of all words which seek to "get him tied up." In the everyday life they begin to understand what a large section work takes out of the life of a factory hand, how the rest of his time is divided between different sections—the family, further education, the union, sport, politics, pleasure, or the struggle for a home of one's own. With astonishment they will learn that the church section is missing altogether, or is so small as to have no importance, or is kept only for special occasions mentioned above. They will see that the non-churchgoer stubbornly resists any enlargement of the church section because such enlargement is only possible at the cost of other sections and he does not want that.

Here at the place of work we are in each other's hands day in, day out, for eight hours and longer. There is no possibility of retreat either for the one side away from this gospel and its messenger, or for the other to the pulpit and the circle of those who like "comfortable customers take his wares Sunday by Sunday without criticism" as one business man expressed it. On the contrary, everything is meticulously examined and there is much criticism. I am often frightened when I think how much, as a matter of course, we call our church members to bear witness in this place. How harmless this working world must seem to us when we send our theological students into it to get experience. In fact, this world is a battlefield in which there is not only a struggle for one's job, one's proper pay and daily bread, but also for the question of who can help one to preserve one's decency and humanity. It is not easy in this working world to remain a Christian. Let no one think that one can go into this wasteland so long neglected by the Church to plant a church garden with the usual theological and biblical tools. Between the factory chimneys there are no church garden idylls; here we are asked questions to which we do not know the answers; here we get into situations in which we do not know how to behave as Christians; here we stop speaking so glibly of holding fast in the world to our faith. I understand the theological students who came out of the factory to me and said they did not want to study theology any more; *this* world could not be won by any preaching or any witness; they refused, however, to be appointed by the church to look after parishes in a corner and spend their life and use their strength outside this, the greatest battlefield of *today*. We would surely have more theological students today if we showed them their task in the modern world of work and were in the position to give them the necessary tools. Do you understand what it can mean to be at the mercy of this world? Do you understand why we cannot so easily say "*there* is the place of testing for the laity, *our* place is the pulpit?" It seems to me unrealistic and unmerciful to send our few working class Christian brothers into the battlefield on which we officers of the church have not yet appeared or have held our own so little.

I would like to show you from one quite simple example how little we reckon with the laws and customs of this world of work, and how little we can meet them from our experiences as parish priests. People ask us in church why we want to meet the industrial worker in his place of work, particularly, instead of visiting him at home in his family circle. But when I experience in my own person how the production of the factory controls my life with inescapable laws and determines its rhythm, I understand that the worker is no longer master of his leisure, nor more free to form his own home life. His own shift work and that of his wife, his elder children, or other members of the family, allows no fixed leisure, no free evening in the old sense; often too, no fixed day off in the week. There is often no longer any talk of Sundays or holidays in common. The modern process of production does not allow man to live any more in the natural rhythm of day and night, six day week and Sabbath rest. His work is not directed by sun and moon, or summer and winter. It has its own rhythm. Exactly what morning and evening prayer shall we teach the boys and girls who in this rhythm will soon be going to sleep in the morning and working in the evening? What does it mean that the time for waking and sleeping, for working and resting changes every eight or ten days with the change of shift? The rhythm of our church life may in the village and in particular classes still correspond with the rhythm of nature and work, or at least they may not clash. But for the millions of men involved in the process of production there is *only* the other rhythm. But one cannot march between two bands playing in different rhythms. It is in fact a world of its own which cannot be treated with recipes which proved their worth in the preindustrial world.

This one example should show us in many other ways that it is not only the fault of the non-churchgoer worker that the world of the church is so far from his life. Is there any possibility at all of bringing these two worlds together? It is certain that the church cannot force its rhythm on this world. But out of love for the men who are set in this rhythm, it could stop making its own rhythm the necessary condition for a Christian church life. It could try to share the life of the men who are subject to this law. This attempt must begin by entering into this new world, by being there in the present. The English have briefly and pointedly decided the task as "to be not to act."

3. *The Witness of the Word.* At this point many of you will have become restless. Does not faith come from preaching? Are we not a church of the Word? Certainly, but of the Word which became flesh and always presses towards incarnation, material form (transformation?) and body. Speaking and Being are not separated in our imitation of Jesus. Both belong together in the workshop too. Speech is an unartificial, inevitable result of our presence in the workshop. Please do not think now of religious conversations and discussions about God. We do not like them because they are generally too abstract. It is much more a question of a factual conversation in which it is not necessary to change suddenly to the Christian and church topics. In *Evanston* it was said, "God's conversation with the Church is a conversation about the world. The church must be ready to speak about the world, if it wishes to speak with God. The world is the direct object of God's action." It is a widespread mistake among church people and non-church people that God is only interested in religion. That is thinking in sectors. In work I must be careful not to think like this. For it is not my job to enlarge the other person's church sector but I myself must be tested as to whether I only understand how to talk propaganda about God or whether God is the centre of my life in this world of work also. But that must be proved precisely in "secular" conversations, when we are talking about work, pay, one's colleagues and the boss, the office staff and the director, the demands of the firm and the demands of the union.

So the factory siren becomes a call to the service ordained for us by God in this world. So we believe that we go through the factory door in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and to our work there and hold our conversations. We think that this is a legitimate form of preaching, is the Word of God. Please imagine such a talk as quite natural; it deals with the everyday questions of jobs, family, the joys and burdens of life, but always very concretely. In these worldly questions the Word of God wants to take form. Hardly a shift passes without some form of group discussion, either in the production unit, the working unit or the group round the breakfast table.

Not every form of industrial work provides the same possibilities. But there are only a few businesses in which such conversations are entirely impossible. Parish workers have been in factories in Frankfurt, Offenbach and elsewhere in a workshop with a large number of women and girls often eight hours on end. They tell how alongside the purely mechanical work with their hands they have been able to talk to each other or even sing. Prof. Hammelsbeck, in a lecture entitled "The Changed World Situation of Modern Man as a Religious Problem" (*Theol. Existenz Heute, No.* 45). says among other things "Religious trimmings as a means of communication are out of date. How can the person who has been thrown out of almost all traditions still approve the religious one? It becomes ballast to be thrown overboard as soon as possible without asking if the content still has some value." We should recognize that the world has grown up.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes from prison "I don't want man in his worldliness to be made to feel a worm, but to be confronted with God at his strongest point." The place for that with the non-churchgoer is his place of work. That is his strongest point.

But you will ask: where is our concern for the Word of the Bible, the direct preaching and hearing the text? That exists in the working world too. I did not believe it myself. For years I had been trying to understand my secular workmates. Now they are beginning to take my worry and anxiety seriously. They have noticed what a difficulty my Sunday sermon is to me. At first they were surprised, "but you've studied for it!" They then offered to discuss the next sermon with me. Recently we have been meeting in each other's houses. We bring our Bibles, I have to open them at the text, otherwise they would not find it. Then the questioning begins. "Do you have to stick to the Bible? Why exactly? What does this sentence mean? That one is quite unintelligible. Can't you leave it out?" It is a mixed group; one has left the church, another has his church tax in the Catholic column on his pay packet, a third has a religious interest in a kind of pantheism, for another the word "God" is the screen for human inadequacy. It is doubtful whether they will ever come to church to hear what has come out of "their" sermon. But should we be sorry about that when the Word of God has already been heard among them? They allow themselves to be invited to our house with the building of which they have been helping for years. Here we have a service with them, but in quite a different form from the usual one. The Service begins in the morning and ends in the evening. For we stay the whole day together, eat with one another, discuss what has been said in small groups and talk together about the questions which interest us. We even have so-called Sacraments in this group, so far Baptism, Marriage and Burial. The question of Communion is still open. There is no paragraph of church order dealing with this form of church life. But what the Indian (sic) D. T. Niles said at Evanston, is always true of our work. "Our loyalty to Jesus Christ sets limits to our search for successful methods of evangelism; all the same the love of God drives us to seek more successful methods for each human being."

4. *The Community.* But in reality it is not a question of method. That is not enough. To seek for methods would mean "everything is all right with us; we just haven't got the knack of bringing these outsiders into our fellowship." In fact it is a question of fellowship, of a body, the body of Jesus Christ; not of the religious form of this body but of its secular form. We are not concerned with the name "Christian" but with whether God's act of reconciliation happens in the world, in our case in the modern working world. The witness to this act of God is not a religious but a secular social event. It leads to a changed relation between men, between workers at their place of work, between them and the boss, between employer and employee, between man and wife, parents and children. So the witness to the God who loves the world and the worldly becomes salt for the earth, the yeast which preserves and shapes society. In these changed relations between men and in their finding of each other the church is born. In the Report of Section II of Evanston it says "Also wherever Christians find themselves separated by caste, class, racial and other barriers, they will boldly cross them, manifesting Christ's solidarity with the whole of mankind. In a divided world they will fulfill Christ's Ministry of peace, manifesting in their own life the new mankind which has begun in Jesus Christ. Without the Gospel the world is without sense, but without the world the Gospel is without reality."

This sentence cannot simply be uttered in the modern world as an assertion and a demand. It can only in humility be practiced and witnessed to in this very world of work. Is our church in this world today? Is it confronting this world? Who are these who are sent out into this world? Who is ready to send them? Who to go? And what do we say when, as a result of such going out into the world of work, communities of new Christians are built whose form calls the normal structure of the parish in question? What will be their relation to the old local parish? These are questions which I cannot answer and also do not want to answer. For it would mean making a picture today already and drawing up a programme of how such a parish should look. Our wishes can easily prevent God from building for the sake of mankind in this altered world a new congregation which looks different from hitherto. It says in *Evanston* in the report of Section II, "We would urge the churches to give serious thought to these questions; for they point to a challenge which the new form of society in our technical age makes to the present social structure of parish life."

All critique must help us to do a little better the service which God has laid on us for the world of work. We should thank God that He has granted us at so many points a new beginning, *even* if it is still a small one. Perhaps our churches can take up these attempts a little more than so far and help to carry them. Still more than hitherto Christians must recognize that God does not simply call the non-churchgoer to the place where our congregations are, but that He wishes to go with us us today to the many, so as to win some of them and with them to build a Church which will serve the world. That may mean for the Church departure from a well-known and trusted land. But for the Church, too, what Christ says must be true, "He that will save his life shall lose it: but he that loses his life for my sake shall find it."